



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 31, 2008
www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae
Docket #: 08-cr-08-LJO

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SECOND LASER TAGGER SENTENCED—18 MONTHS IN PRISON

FRESNO, Calif.—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent-in-Charge Drew S. Parenti, and Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood announced today that KENDRA CHRISTINE SNOW, 26, of Fresno, Calif., was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison for attempting to interfere with the safe operation of a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter by shining a powerful handheld laser into the cockpit.

The case is the product of an investigation conducted by the Bakersfield Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), comprised of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Kern County Sheriff's Department, and other local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, SNOW pleaded guilty on July 18, 2008, to intentionally pointing a powerful green laser beam at the cockpit of, a Kern County Sheriff's Department helicopter on November 8, 2007, at about 10:55 p.m. At that time, the helicopter was flying at 500 feet above the ground during a routine patrol in Bakersfield, Calif. When the light hit the cockpit, it disoriented and injured the Kern County Sheriff's pilot, as well as the passenger, a tactical observer.

Lasers, an acronym for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation, pose a safety hazard to flight operations. The focused beams of a laser remain powerful at extended viewing distances and can expose pilots to radiation levels above those considered to be flight safe. Brief exposure to even a relatively low-powered laser beam can cause discomfort and temporary visual impairments, such as glare, flash blind, and afterimages.

According to court documents, the pilot and a tactical observer were able to pinpoint the origin of the laser beam to co-defendant JARED JAMES DOOLEY's Bakersfield residence. At the time, DOOLEY was SNOW's boyfriend. On November 27, task force members executed a federal search warrant, locating a handheld green laser device in DOOLEY's pickup truck and a red laser device in his home. SNOW and DOOLEY later admitted to law enforcement agents that they had used the green laser device on the night of the incident. On October 10, 2008, DOOLEY was sentenced to two years in prison.

According to the Federal Aviation Aerospace Administration, incidents involving laser illumination of aircraft occur daily and occur with significantly higher frequency in the Western Pacific Region. Laser illumination incidents compromise aviation safety and threaten flight-crew vision. The laser device that SNOW used emits a green beam that is more powerful and dangerous than the common red beam and comes with a warning label and an instruction booklet with a danger warning. The government's military radiation expert concluded that the laser that

SNOW pointed at the cockpit of the Kern County Sheriff's helicopter "has the ability to cause visual interference to pilots of aircraft located several kilometers away." The Kern County Sheriff helicopter pilot testified that he felt pain and discomfort in his eyes for several hours.

If you have information regarding the use of lasers to interfere with aircrafts, please contact your local FBI office.

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